Australian Bureau of Statistics

6220.0 - Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, Sep 2006

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One in five Australians not in the labour force want to work: ABS

One in five (20%) Australians who were not in the labour force (i.e. neither employed nor unemployed) wanted to work at September 2006, according to latest results from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

However, of the 1.1 million people aged 15 years and over who were not in the labour force and wanted to work, only 6% (60,200 people) were actively looking for work.

One in three (33%) Australians aged 15 years and over were not in the labour force at September 2006. Of the 5.4 million people not in the labour force, 61% were women.

Almost one-third (31%) of those not in the labour force were aged 70 years and over, while a further 15% were aged 15 to 24 years.

Of those not in the labour force who wanted to work, 70% (751,600 people) were marginally attached to the labour force (see media note).

For men marginally attached to the labour force who were not actively looking for work, the most commonly reported main reasons were 'attending an educational institution' (33%) and 'own ill health or physical disability' (20%). For women, the main reasons were 'caring for children' (28%) and 'attending an educational institution' (17%).

Around 7% of the marginally attached were discouraged job seekers – they wanted to work and were available to work within four weeks, but were not actively looking for work because they believed they would not find a job for reasons related to the labour market. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of these were women.

More than one third (37%) of discouraged job seekers said their main reason for not actively looking for work was that they were considered too old by employers, and more than a quarter (27%) said there were no jobs in their locality or line of work.

Further information is in *Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2006* (cat. no. 6220.0).

Media Note: People not in the labour force are defined as **marginally attached** to the labour force if they want to work, and are either not actively looking for work but are available to start work within four weeks, or are actively looking for work but are not available to start in the survey reference week.

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